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SUBJECT: MEPI SMALL GRANTS REPORT FOR AMCHAM MOROCCO

¶1. The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) website has effectively addressed private sector demand both in Morocco and in the U.S. for greater information sharing on the provisions of the agreement. In 2004, the site logged over 1.3 million hits, representing 13,522 individual visitors and 60,854 file downloads. In 2005, the FTA web site registered 1.8 million hits, 35,888 individual visitors, and 141,150 file downloads (including 36,154 downloads of the various sections of the AmCham-produced Morocco Trade and Investment Guide). Visitors were based in the United States (57%), Morocco (31%), and France (5%). The web site effectively promoted greater public awareness of the agreement and facilitated the efforts of investors, both key Mission priorities.

¶2. New features added to the website as part of a second grant included AmCham discussion boards and a resume database. These also contributed significantly to disseminating information on the U.S.-Morocco FTA. As of May 18, 2006, the discussion boards covered five FTA-related topics, including arbitration, market access, machinery, arbitrage and insurance. The newly-revised site also contained over 161 individual messages from interested investors and an employment database with 170 posted resumes. The site has registered 28 companies for access to the resume database and has posted five job opportunities.

¶3. AmCham successfully implemented both grants related to the website project through existing staff and through contractors. However, Post believes, (and AmCham staff confirm), that AmCham would require additional staffing or increased use of subcontractors to effectively implement a significantly larger grant in the future.

¶4. Post believes that the AmCham website is an excellent model to duplicate in other countries, particularly within the proposed Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA). Linking together similar sites among countries could offer a convenient web portal for investors. The added features included in the second grant are particularly useful to investors and others seeking information on the agreement. Post recommends funding of similar grants throughout the region.

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